

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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For Immediate Release

April 21, 2005

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on April 20, 2005, **RUBEN ARROYO**, age 28, and **LAURA BERBER**, age 29, both of Chicago, Illinois, were indicted by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in East St. Louis, Illinois, in a one-count Indictment.

The Indictment charged that from in or about September 2004, to on or about April 20, 2005, in Jefferson County, Illinois, within the Southern District of Illinois, **ARROYO** and **BERBER** did knowingly and intentionally combine, conspire, and agree with each other and with others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, to knowingly and intentionally distribute 50 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing cocaine base, in the form commonly called "crack cocaine," and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing methamphetamine, Schedule II Controlled Substances, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 841(b)(1)(A); all in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846.

An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

The offense carries a penalty of between 10 years' and life imprisonment, a fine of up to \$4,000,000, and a term of at least 5 years supervised release.

This coordinated investigation was conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration as part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement and Task Force (OCDETF), along with the Illinois State Police, the Joint Narcotics Unit of the Mt. Vernon Police Department and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Jackson County Sheriff's Department, the Carbondale Police Department, and other state and local law enforcement authorities pursuant to their participation in the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. Under the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors are working together to prosecute drug dealers, felons in possession of firearms, and criminals that use firearms to commit violent offenses or drug trafficking offenses.

In addition, the Jefferson County States Attorney's Office has assisted throughout the investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys George Norwood and Amanda A. Robertson.